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Benoît Cadre

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# ON SYMMETRIC SENSITIVITY

Benot CADRE and Pierre JACOB

UMR CNRS 5149, Equipe de Probabilités et Statistique  
Université Montpellier II, CC 051, Place E. Bataillon,  
34095 Montpellier cedex 5, FRANCE

**Abstract** We define the concept of symmetric sensitivity with respect to initial conditions for the endomorphisms on Lebesgue metric spaces. The idea is that the orbits of almost every pair of nearby initial points (for the product of the invariant measure) of a symmetrically sensitive map may diverge from a positive quantity independent of the initial points. We study the relationships between symmetric sensitivity and weak mixing, symmetric sensitivity and positiveness of metric entropy and we compute the largest sensitivity constant.

**Index Terms** Sensitive dependence on initial conditions, Measure-preserving transformation, Ergodicity, Mixing, Metric entropy.

**AMS 2000 Classification** 37A05, 37A25, 37A35.

## 1. Introduction

The concept of *sensitive dependence on initial conditions* has attracted much attention in recent years and several authors have tried to formalize it in various ways. The phrase -sensitive dependence on initial conditions- was first used by Ruelle (1978), to indicate some exponential rate of divergence of orbits of nearby points. More generally, it captures the idea that a very small change in the initial condition can cause a big change in the trajectory. Following the pioneer work by Guckenheimer (1979), Devaney (1989) called sensitive a self-map  $T : X \rightarrow X$  on the metric space  $(X, d)$  satisfying the property : there exists  $\delta > 0$  such that for all  $x \in X$  and all  $\varepsilon > 0$  there is some  $y \in X$  which is within a distance  $\varepsilon$  of  $x$  and for some  $n \geq 0$ ,  $d(T^n x, T^n y) \geq \delta$ . In the last years, several authors proposed sufficient conditions both on  $T$  and  $(X, d)$  to ensure the sensitivity property (*cf.* Abraham

*et al*, 2002, 2004, Banks *et al*, 1992, Glasner and Weiss, 1993, Guckenheimer, 1979).

However, sensitive dependence on initial conditions was first defined in Chaos Theory to measure the divergence of orbits of nearby points, by analogy with the *butterfly effect* described by the meteorologist Ed Lorenz (for an overview in Chaos Theory, we refer the reader to the book by Devaney, 1989). From this point of view, the above definition of sensitivity appears to be too weak. In order to follow the sensitivity idea drawn by the butterfly effect, one could say that  $T$  is sensitive if there exists  $\delta > 0$  such that for all  $x, y$  in  $X$ , one can find  $n \geq 0$  with  $d(T^n x, T^n y) \geq \delta$ . However, this property appears to be too strong because it is never satisfied by the non injective maps, such as the archetype of a chaotic map, namely the quadratic one  $Tx = 4x(1 - x)$  on  $X = [0, 1]$ .

As an attempt to weaken the previous definition of sensitivity, we make use of tools from Ergodic Theory. From now on, we consider an endomorphism  $T$  on a probability Lebesgue space  $(X, \mathcal{B}, \mu)$  (*cf.* Petersen, 1983, page 16) and we fix a metric  $d$  on  $X$ . For simplicity, we assume throughout that the support of  $\mu$ , denoted  $\text{supp } \mu$ , is not reduced to a single point.

Our sensitivity property described below is easily shown to be stronger than Guckenheimer's one.

**Definition** *The endomorphism  $T$  is said to be symmetrically sensitive (with respect to initial conditions) if there exists  $\delta > 0$  -a sensitivity constant- such that for  $\mu^{\otimes 2}$ -a.e.  $(x, y) \in X^2$ , one can find  $n \geq 0$  with  $d(T^n x, T^n y) \geq \delta$ .*

Equivalently,  $T$  is symmetrically sensitive if there exists  $\delta > 0$  with

$$\mu^{\otimes 2} \left( \bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_\delta \right) = 0,$$

where, here and in the following,  $\overline{T} = T \times T$  is the map on  $X^2$  defined by  $\overline{T} : (x, y) \mapsto (Tx, Ty)$  and, for any  $r > 0$ ,  $\mathcal{A}_r$  stands for the set :

$$\mathcal{A}_r := \{(x, y) \in X^2 : d(x, y) < r\}.$$

This kind of sensitivity can be viewed as well as a property of  $\overline{T}$  which justifies in a sense the adjective *symmetrical*. Moreover, we note that this

sensitivity property is the exact measure theoretic equivalent of the concept studied in Akin and Kolyada (2003) in a topological dynamic context.

Section 2 is devoted to the computation of the sensitivity constant and to the case where  $T$  is weakly mixing. The case where  $T$  is of positive metric entropy is studied in Section 3.

## 2. Symmetric sensitivity, weak mixing and the sensitivity constant

Observe that if  $\delta$  is a sensitivity constant for  $T$ , then so is any positive  $\delta' \leq \delta$ . This leads to consider the following quantity, denoted  $\Delta(T)$  :

$$\Delta(T) = \sup \{ \delta : \delta \text{ is a sensitivity constant for } T \}.$$

From now on,  $\text{diam}(A)$  stands for the diameter of  $A \subset X$  and for all  $z \in X$ ,  $r > 0$ ,  $B(z, r)$  is the open ball :

$$B(z, r) = \{x \in X : d(z, x) < r\}.$$

**Theorem 2.1** *Assume that  $T$  is symmetrically sensitive. Then,*

- (i) *There exists  $\delta > 0$  such that for  $\mu^{\otimes 2}$ -a.e.  $(x, y) \in X^2$ , one can find a sequence  $(n_k)_{k \geq 0}$  with  $d(T^{n_k}x, T^{n_k}y) \geq \delta$  for all  $k \geq 0$  ;*
- (ii) *For  $\mu^{\otimes 2}$ -a.e.  $(x, y) \in X^2$ , one has  $\sup_{n \geq 0} d(T^n x, T^n y) \geq \Delta(T)$  ;*
- (iii)  $\Delta(T) \leq \text{diam}(\text{supp } \mu)$ .

We first need a lemma. Notice that, since the support of  $\mu$  is not reduced to a single point, there exists  $\delta > 0$  with  $\mu^{\otimes 2}(\mathcal{A}_\delta) < 1$ . Hence, the quantity

$$a(\mu) := \sup \{ \delta : \mu^{\otimes 2}(\mathcal{A}_\delta) < 1 \}$$

is positive.

**Lemma 2.1** *One has*

$$a(\mu) = \text{diam}(\text{supp } \mu).$$

**Proof** First notice that  $a(\mu) \leq D := \text{diam}(\text{supp } \mu)$  because for all  $\varepsilon > 0$ ,  $\mu^{\otimes 2}(\mathcal{A}_{D+\varepsilon}) = 1$ . Moreover, let for all  $\varepsilon > 0$ ,

$$F_\varepsilon = \left\{ (x, y) \in \text{supp } \mu^{\otimes 2} : d(x, y) \leq D - \frac{\varepsilon}{2} \right\},$$

where  $\text{supp } \mu^{\otimes 2}$  denotes the support of  $\mu^{\otimes 2}$ . Then,  $\mu^{\otimes 2}(F_\varepsilon) < 1$  because  $F_\varepsilon$  is a closed set and

$$F_\varepsilon \subsetneq \text{supp } \mu^{\otimes 2} = \text{supp } \mu \times \text{supp } \mu.$$

Since  $\mathcal{A}_{D-\varepsilon} \subset F_\varepsilon$ , one deduces that  $\mu^{\otimes 2}(\mathcal{A}_{D-\varepsilon}) < 1$  and hence, that  $a(\mu) \geq D$  •

**Proof of Theorem 2.1** (i) It is a straightforward consequence of Halmos Recurrence Theorem (cf. Petersen, 1983, page 39).

(ii) If  $T$  is symmetrically sensitive, then for all  $\varepsilon > 0$  small enough :

$$\mu^{\otimes 2}\left(\bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_{\Delta(T)-\varepsilon}\right) = 0.$$

We get from a monotonicity argument that :

$$\mu^{\otimes 2}\left(\bigcup_{\varepsilon > 0} \bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_{\Delta(T)-\varepsilon}\right) = \lim_{\varepsilon \searrow 0} \mu^{\otimes 2}\left(\bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_{\Delta(T)-\varepsilon}\right) = 0,$$

hence Assertion (ii), because

$$\bigcup_{\varepsilon > 0} \bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_{\Delta(T)-\varepsilon} = \left\{ (x, y) \in X^2 : \sup_{n \geq 0} d(T^n x, T^n y) < \Delta(T) \right\}.$$

(iii) Assume that  $a(\mu) < \Delta(T)$ . For any  $r \in ]a(\mu), \Delta(T)[$ , one has simultaneously :

$$\mu^{\otimes 2}(\mathcal{A}_r) = 1 \text{ and } \mu^{\otimes 2}\left(\bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_r\right) = 0,$$

which is a contradiction. Therefore,  $a(\mu) \geq \Delta(T)$  and (iii) is now straightforward from Lemma 2.1 •

**Theorem 2.2** Assume that  $T$  is weakly mixing. Then,  $T$  is symmetrically sensitive and moreover :

$$\Delta(T) = \text{diam}(\text{supp } \mu).$$

### Remarks

- Ergodicity is not strong enough in order to ensure the symmetric sensitivity property. Indeed, consider the case  $X = \mathbb{R}/\mathbb{Z}$ ,  $\mu$  the Haar-Lebesgue measure and  $d$  the natural metric on  $X$ . The self-map  $T$  defined by  $Tx = x + \theta \pmod{1}$ , where  $\theta$  is an irrational number, being an isometry for  $d$ , can not be symmetrically sensitive. However, it is known to be ergodic.
- In the case of a Guckenheimer's type definition of sensitivity, Abraham *et al* (2002, 2004) also provide some bounds for the largest sensitivity constant.
- For the classical dynamical systems such as  $r$ -adic maps, tent map or quadratic map, one has therefore  $\Delta(T) = 1$ . Hence, the orbits of almost all pair of nearby initial points may diverge from a quantity which is closer to 1.

**Proof of Theorem 2.2** Let  $\delta < \text{diam}(\text{supp } \mu)$ . Since  $\overline{T}$  is an ergodic endomorphism on  $(X^2, \mathcal{B} \otimes \mathcal{B}, \mu^{\otimes 2})$  (cf. Petersen, 1983, page 65) and

$$\bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_\delta$$

is a  $\overline{T}$ -invariant set, one has

$$\mu^{\otimes 2} \left( \bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_\delta \right) = 0,$$

because  $\mu^{\otimes 2}(\mathcal{A}_\delta^d) < 1$  by Lemma 2.1. Hence,  $T$  is symmetrically sensitive and  $\Delta(T) \geq \text{diam}(\text{supp } \mu)$ . Apply now Theorem 2.1 (iii), and the theorem is proved •

Observe now that for  $\mu^{\otimes 2}$ -a.e.  $(x, y) \in X^2$ , one has

$$\sup_{n \geq 0} d(T^n x, T^n y) \leq \text{diam}(\text{supp } \mu).$$

Corollary 2.1 below is then a straightforward consequence of Theorem 2.1 (ii) and Theorem 2.2.

**Corollary 2.1** *If  $T$  is weakly mixing, then for  $\mu^{\otimes 2}$ -a.e.  $(x, y) \in X^2$  :*

$$\sup_{n \geq 0} d(T^n x, T^n y) = \text{diam}(\text{supp } \mu).$$

### 3. Symmetric sensitivity and metric entropy

For any mesurable countable partition  $\alpha$  of  $X$ , we denote by  $h(T, \alpha)$  the metric entropy of the transformation  $T$  with respect to the partition  $\alpha$  (*cf.* Petersen, 1983, Chapter 5). Whatever being the chosen definition of sensitivity, it is usually expected that positiveness of the entropy implies the sensitivity property (*cf.* Glasner and Weiss, 1993, Blanchard *et al.*, 2002, and Abraham *et al.*, 2004, in which positiveness of the Lyapunov exponent is considered). Theorem 4.1 below gives an answer to this problem in the case of symmetric sensitivity.

**Theorem 3.1** *Assume that  $T$  is ergodic and consider a finite mesurable partition  $\alpha = \{P_1, \dots, P_l\}$  of  $X$ . If  $P_1, \dots, P_l$  are  $\mu$ -continuity sets for  $d$  and if  $h(T, \alpha) > 0$ , then  $T$  is symmetrically sensitive.*

A very similar conclusion is obtained in Blanchard *et al.* (2002), but these authors consider the case where  $T$  is a homeomorphism on a compact space.

**Proof** Without loss of generality, we can assume that  $h(T, \alpha) < \infty$ . For all  $D \in \mathcal{B}$  and  $\varepsilon > 0$ , denote by  $D^{-\varepsilon}$  the internal  $\varepsilon$ -boundary of  $D$  :

$$D^{-\varepsilon} = \{x \in D : d(x, D^c) < \varepsilon\},$$

and moreover :

$$K_\varepsilon = \exp \left( 2l \sum_{i=1}^l \mu(P_i^{-\varepsilon}) \right).$$

Since the  $P_i$ 's are  $\mu$ -continuity sets,  $K_\varepsilon \rightarrow 1$  as  $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$ . Hence, one can choose  $\delta > 0$  such that

$$K_\delta 2^{-h(T, \alpha)/2} < 1. \quad (4.1)$$

The map

$$x \mapsto \mu \left( \bigcap_{n \geq 0} T^{-n} B(T^n x, \delta) \right)$$

defined on  $X$  is  $T$ -invariant and moreover, according to the Fubini Theorem,

$$\mu^{\otimes 2} \left( \bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_\delta \right) = \int_X \mu \left( \bigcap_{n \geq 0} T^{-n} B(T^n x, \delta) \right) \mu(dx).$$

Consequently, by ergodicity of  $T$ , we have for  $\mu$ -a.e.  $x \in X$  :

$$\mu^{\otimes 2} \left( \bigcap_{n \geq 0} \overline{T}^{-n} \mathcal{A}_\delta \right) = \mu \left( \bigcap_{n \geq 0} T^{-n} B(T^n x, \delta) \right). \quad (4.2)$$

We deduce from the von Neumann Ergodic Theorem that for  $\mu$ -a.e.  $x \in X$  :

$$\frac{1}{n} \text{card} \left( k \in \{0, \dots, n\} : T^k x \in \bigcup_{i=1}^l P_i^{-\delta} \right) \rightarrow \sum_{i=1}^l \mu(P_i^{-\delta}). \quad (4.3)$$

We now fix a point  $x \in X$  which satisfies both (4.2) and (4.3). It is associated with it a sequence  $(i_n)_{n \geq 0} \in \{1, \dots, l\}^{\mathbb{N}}$  such that  $T^n x \in P_{i_n}$  for all  $n \geq 0$ . For all  $n \geq 0$ , we let :

$$\mathcal{Q}_n = \{k \in \{0, \dots, n\} : B(T^k x, \delta) \not\subseteq P_{i_k}\}.$$

For all  $n \geq 0$ ,

$$\begin{aligned} \text{card } \mathcal{Q}_n &\leq \text{card} \left( k \in \{0, \dots, n\} : T^k x \in P_{i_k}^{-\delta} \right) \\ &\leq \text{card} \left( k \in \{0, \dots, n\} : T^k x \in \bigcup_{i=1}^l P_i^{-\delta} \right) \end{aligned}$$

By (4.3), there exists  $N_1 \geq 0$  such that for all  $n \geq N_1$  :

$$\text{card } \mathcal{Q}_n \leq 2n \sum_{i=1}^l \mu(P_i^{-\delta}).$$

For all  $n \geq 0$ , we let :

$$\mathcal{S}_n = \left\{ (s_k)_{k=0, \dots, n} : s_k \in \{1, \dots, l\} \text{ if } k \in \mathcal{Q}_n \text{ and } s_k = i_k \text{ if } k \notin \mathcal{Q}_n \right\}.$$

This set satisfies, for all  $n \geq N_1$  :

$$\text{card } \mathcal{S}_n = \exp \left( \text{card } \mathcal{Q}_n \log l \right) \leq \exp \left( 2nl \sum_{i=1}^l \mu(P_i^{-\delta}) \right) = K_\delta^n. \quad (4.4)$$

Now denote, for  $n \geq 0$  and  $s \in \mathcal{S}_n$  :

$$L_{n,s} = \bigcap_{k=0}^n T^{-k} P_{s_k}.$$

For all  $n \geq 0$ , we have the following inclusions :

$$\begin{aligned} \bigcap_{k=0}^n T^{-k} B(T^k x, \delta) &= \bigcap_{k \in \mathcal{Q}_n^c \cup \mathcal{Q}_n} T^{-k} B(T^k x, \delta) \\ &\subset \bigcap_{k \in \mathcal{Q}_n^c} T^{-k} P_{i_k} \\ &\subset \bigcup_{s \in \mathcal{S}_n} L_{n,s}. \end{aligned} \quad (4.5)$$



Now fix  $\varepsilon \in ]0, h(T, \alpha)/2[$ . By the Entropy Equipartition Property (*cf.* Petersen, 1983, page 263), there exists  $N_2 \geq 0$  such that for all  $n \geq N_2$ , the elements of  $\{1, \dots, l\}^{n+1}$  can be divided into two disjoint classes,  $\mathcal{G}_n$  and  $\mathcal{B}_n$ , such that :

$$\mu\left(\bigcup_{s \in \mathcal{B}_n} L_{n,s}\right) \leq \varepsilon,$$

and, for all  $s \in \mathcal{G}_n$  :

$$\mu(L_{n,s}) \leq 2^{-n(h(T, \alpha) - \varepsilon)}.$$

We then deduce from (4.4) and (4.5) that for all  $n \geq \max(N_1, N_2)$  :

$$\begin{aligned} \mu\left(\bigcap_{k=0}^n T^{-k} B(T^k x, \delta)\right) &\leq \mu\left(\bigcup_{s \in \mathcal{S}_n \cap \mathcal{B}_n} L_{n,s}\right) + \sum_{s \in \mathcal{S}_n \cap \mathcal{G}_n} \mu(L_{n,s}) \\ &\leq \varepsilon + \text{card } \mathcal{S}_n \max_{s \in \mathcal{G}_n} \mu(L_{n,s}) \\ &\leq \varepsilon + K_\delta^n 2^{-n(h(T, \alpha) - \varepsilon)} \\ &\leq \varepsilon + K_\delta^n 2^{-nh(T, \alpha)/2}, \end{aligned}$$

where the latter inequality comes from the fact that  $\varepsilon < h(T, \alpha)/2$ . Letting  $n \rightarrow \infty$ , we deduce from (4.1) that for all  $\varepsilon > 0$  small enough :

$$\lim_n \mu\left(\bigcap_{k=0}^n T^{-k} B(T^k x, \delta)\right) \leq \varepsilon,$$

hence, letting  $\varepsilon \rightarrow 0$  :

$$\mu\left(\bigcap_{n \geq 0} T^{-n} B(T^n x, \delta)\right) = 0.$$

Finally, we deduce from (4.2) and the choice of  $x$  that  $T$  is symmetrically sensitive •

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